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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0295

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 000891

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: 09/08/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [LE](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: UAEG DENIES EXPULSION OF PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE NATIONALS

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DOUGLAS GREENE FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND
[1D](#).

[11](#). (SBU) Palestinian media reported over the September 4 weekend that UAEG was in the process of expelling hundred of Palestinian workers -- mostly Gazans -- from the Emirates. There were also reports in the Lebanese press that Lebanese nationals were being forced to leave the UAE as well. Israeli Daily Haaretz reported both stories September 8 in an article which suggested the deportations were security related due to suspected ties to Hamas and Hezbollah. The Department of Naturalization and Residency in Dubai as well as Federal immigration authorities in Abu Dhabi denied mass expulsions of Palestinian or Lebanese nationals or that any deportations were politically motivated.

[12](#). (C) Palestinian Ambassador to the UAE Khairy al-Aridi was quoted by Ramallah-based Palestinian news agency "Wafa" September 4 denying a deliberate policy on the part of the UAE; he also declined to discuss the issue with post September 7 off-the-record. Dubai online business magazine Kipp Report wrote "QYPG confirmed that the UAE is replacing foreign professionals with UAE citizens as part of the government's Emiratization program." According to an Egyptian diplomat stationed in Abu Dhabi, however, al-Aridi has complained to other Arab diplomats about the deportations, saying that over 600 Palestinians, most from Gaza, are being forced to leave. According to this third-hand report, Hamas leader in Damascus Khaled Meshaal raised this very issue in his Ramadan phone call with UAE President al-Khalifa last month. (NOTE: the phone call but not the substance was reported in the Emirati press. END NOTE.)

[13](#). (C) Lebanese Daily "al Nahar" and Reuters quoted a 'senior Lebanese political source' on September 5 that 45 Lebanese Shia living in the UAE had either not been granted reentry or had been asked to leave the UAE, adding that President Michel Suleiman had sent an envoy to the UAE in recent weeks to discuss this matter. Lebanese Charge also refused to comment on or confirm the visit of any Lebanese officials to Abu Dhabi.

[14](#). (C) Comment: Speculation varies as to the numbers, nationalities and reasons behind the reported departures. In recent years the UAE has replaced a number of its Arab and Muslim expat teacher workforce in an effort to remove extremist content from its public school curriculum. After firing the largely Egyptian teacher population and the secondary Pakistani, some speculate that the UAE has now turned its attention toward Palestinians. Others suggest that the departures are economically motivated -- the latest fallout of the world (and local) economic downturn. The UAEG is not commenting, and immigration is among the most difficult issues [oQTQb"MGzX|\].Q?lmt](#)-based data. We will continue to monitor and update. End Comment.

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